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September 19, 2018

Theresa Parsley  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Re: Comments on Draft Strategic Plan**

Dear Theresa,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft 2019-24 Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Strategic Plan (Plan). Sierra Business Council (SBC) appreciates the incorporation of many of our June 2018 comments on the Strategic Assessment and strongly supports SNC's bold vision to restore resilience to the region's watersheds, forests, landscapes and communities as described in the Plan. We are pleased to offer the following suggestions for consideration as you continue developing the Strategic Plan and would be happy to discuss in greater detail at any time.

Here are our suggestions:

**Healthy Watersheds and Forests**

We appreciate the recognition that increasing biomass and wood products manufacturing is essential to improving forest and watershed health. Sustainably expanding these industries in the Sierra Nevada is critical to achieve the goal of treating 1,000,000 acres of forest lands per year set forth in the California Forest Carbon Plan. In addition, these industries create jobs and offer an opportunity to re-invigorate economically distressed communities throughout the region.

**Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities**

Needs Assessment: Strategies 1-3:

- While assessing climate vulnerability is a crucial next step to improving resilience, it is important that SNC uses the results of vulnerability assessments to drive future decisions around funding and regional priorities. We suggest adding another strategy that says "SNC will take into account climate vulnerability indicators when making decisions about future funding and priorities". SNC should consider prioritizing investments in areas and particularly around communities or key regional assets most vulnerable to climate-related risks like severe wildfire and flooding. This helps ensure that investments and activities occur in the areas and communities where they are most needed.

Developing Partnerships and Resources: Strategies 3 & 4:



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- We appreciate the emphasis on community collaborative efforts throughout this section. SBC hosts the Sierra Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Partnership (Sierra CAMP) which is a group of 32 local governments, businesses, nonprofits, and state and federal agencies focused on promoting and facilitating regional climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, building capacity in the Sierra, and strengthening urban-rural connections to increase investment in our region's communities and natural resources.

Sierra CAMP is interested in expanding its ability to provide technical assistance to local governments, nonprofits, tribes, and other partners working on funding and implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation projects in the region. However, funding is extremely limited for capacity building and coordination despite significant climate risk, the great need for cross-sectoral partnership, and historic underinvestment in climate-related projects in the region. As an existing collaborative, we appreciate SNC's recognition in the draft Plan of the key role that collaboratives play in increasing regional resilience.

#### Funding and Investments: Strategy 5:

- We support the strategy of establishing a directed funding program to support specific programmatic needs. We encourage these programs to be developed in a way that allows for flexibility in the types of financing mechanisms offered and entities SNC can partner with to implement each program. For example, for a program aimed at developing innovative wood products, a program that can offer a variety of ways to access capital – through grants, seed funding, revolving loans, etc. – will be more effective than a program that can only offer one type of financing. Similarly, SNC should be able to partner with a variety of entities who can provide both technical assistance and financing opportunities. Community Development Financing Institutions and nonprofit lenders are examples of the types of entities that can offer these services.

#### Strategic Lands Conserved

##### Needs Assessment: Strategy 1:

- We recommend including a reference to the climate vulnerability assessments described in the Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities goal (Strategies 1-3) as an additional tool for identifying the highest priority areas for strategic land conservation.
- We support developing a regional land conservation needs-assessment. This type of tool will highlight land conservation needs so that they can be incorporated into planning large landscape and climate change mitigation and adaptation projects.

Thank you for your leadership on these critical regional efforts, and the opportunity to provide feedback. We look forward to continued partnership.



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Sincerely,

*Steve R. Frisch*

Steve Frisch  
President  
Sierra Business Council